



COUNTY OF
LOS ANGELES
ANIMAL CARE
AND CONTROL

December 5, 2005

Marcia Mayeda
Director

Administrative Office
5898 Cherry Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90805
(562) 728-4882
Fax (562) 422-3408
<http://animalcontrol.co.la.ca.us>



Shelter locations

11258 S. Garfield Ave.
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 940-6898

216 W. Victoria St.
Gardena, CA 90248
(310) 523-9566

4275 No. Elton
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
(626) 962-3577

5210 W. Avenue I
Lancaster, CA 93536
(661) 940-4191

31044 N. Charlie Cyn. Rd.
Castaic, CA 91384
(661) 257-3191

29525 Agoura Rd.
Agoura, CA 91301
(818) 991-0071

Honorable Board of Supervisors
Room 383
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012-9939

Dear Supervisors:

At the Board meeting of September 13, 2005, I was instructed to investigate and report back to you on national standards and salary levels for animal control services to determine if the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control is adequately staffed.

My purpose here is to report to you on that matter, which required extensive research with other agencies as well as a detailed study of our internal operations to make the determinations required of us by your Board.

I can report to you that, after studying this matter and conducting a thorough review of our current operations, we have concluded our agency would need an additional \$6,643,319 to hire another 128 employees to meet the required level of animal control services.

This figure is based on current salary levels. We are still in the process of reviewing employee salaries and, because of the many classifications involved in that review, expect that review could take several more months.

Our study found staffing deficiencies in many critical areas, particularly animal health care, which has been the focus of state legislation in recent years mandating improved levels of care for animals housed in public shelters, as well as field service and general animal care.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

We have particular concerns in these areas:

- **Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs):** Our agency now has 10 such positions and we need 20. These positions are required under California law to be part of the kennel staff at public animal shelters and they represent our first responders on animal health care issues. They are responsible for monitoring the general health of all animals housed at our shelters and taking the appropriate steps to respond to healthcare problems - particularly communicable diseases which can spread quickly in the confines of an animal shelter. In addition, they treat many of the common medical problems animals face and are a necessary and valuable adjunct to our staff veterinarians. In addition, state law requires that surgical assistants who provide anesthesia must be RVTs. Currently we do not have RVTs assigned to our clinics, which means the shelter-assigned RVTs must leave their job duties to assist our veterinarians so we are compliant with state law. This diversion of staff puts a great strain on our ability to manage the health of our shelter animals.
- **Animal Shelter Aides (ASAs):** This is our entry level position and has a flat salary rate with no step increases. We currently have 66 positions and need 22 more for a total of 88 positions. ASAs provide the direct care to our animals. This duty has risen greatly in complexity over the past number of years. ASA duties go beyond routine kennel cleaning and feeding of animals to the use of computers, reports, handling of animal drugs and medications (including substances controlled by the DEA), performing euthanasia, handling animals, assisting customers and more. Not only do we need more ASAs to adequately provide the level of care to comply with our standards, state law, and public expectations, but it is also necessary that we conduct a classification study for this position. This study is now beginning and I will report the findings to your Board when it is completed.
- **Animal Control Officer I (ACO I):** These are the officers who have the primary responsibility to respond to resident calls for assistance, and they are our first responders to dangerous and vicious animal calls and the officers who will be deployed first to handle any emergency situation such as a wildfire, earthquake, flood or hazardous material spill that mandates the large-scale evacuation of people and their pets. We currently have 74 positions, but need 112 to operate at a safe and responsive level.
- **Call Center Staffing.** As you know, we are centralizing our call receiving and dispatching operations in one location. Residents calling for assistance will still call the local numbers they now use but, using state-of-the-art information technology systems, those calls will be immediately routed to a free-standing office at our Downey Shelter. The Call Center will begin operations later this month. Since this is a round-the-clock, 365-day operation, it must be staffed at all times. We are beginning with an initial staff of 17, but will require 36 positions to adequately field

the thousands of calls received each month. In addition, we have determined that our dispatch division should be staffed with Dispatcher items, not ACO items. Our plan includes these changes.

- Information Technology: Our agency has two positions in this area and needs a minimum of six positions. The County's emphasis on computers and information systems to speed up and improve the quality of service delivery depends on the skill and availability of persons trained in Information Technology. In recent years, our Department has upgraded not only its computer systems, but has installed a voice-over IP telephone system. The complexity and specialized nature of these high-speed, high-volume systems require the attention of persons with expert knowledge in these areas. In addition, our department has embraced the County's goals of using performance measurements to evaluate and deliver quality services. These performance measurements are compiled through our information technologies and require trained personnel to write reports, our agency now has the fewest number of Information Technology positions of any County department. The small staff is overworked and completion of critical projects has been delayed by the fact we have only two persons to deal with every issue relating to Information Technology in our agency.
- Administration: Over the years, we have made a conscious effort to limit and restrict growth in this area, and that has led to some detrimental side effects. My chief deputy and deputy director for operations are both so overloaded that, all too frequently, they are still at work late at night as well as coming in on weekends and holidays in an effort to manage their workload. This is not only unfair to them, but it is detrimental to the organization as a whole. Therefore, I am requesting the immediate addition of a Deputy Director for Administrative Services and a Deputy Director for Special Programs.
 - ✓ The Deputy Director for Administrative Services would be in charge of finance and budget operations, human resources, billing and services for our 50 contract cities, procurement, information technology and internal communications (radio, telephone services and e-mail services).
 - ✓ The Deputy Director for Special Programs would be in charge of dangerous and vicious dog investigations, our newly formed Safe Neighborhoods Program to identify potentially dangerous dogs and prevent them from attacking local residents, children and other animals, the activities of our staff who investigate cases of severe animal abuse and neglect, community outreach, media relations, volunteer programs, business licensing and disaster response.

Honorable Board of Supervisors

December 5, 2005

Page 4

Overall, I am seeking to expand our administrative staff from its current level of 38 positions to a total of 48 positions, an addition of only ten persons.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact me at (562) 728-4610.

Sincerely,

Marcia Mayeda
Director

MM:nr

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer